Poultry Processing and Marketing Group launching in Central Maryland

Got poultry? Need them processed? Looking to rein in production costs through group purchases and services? Could you use an additional volume market for your sustainable raised poultry? Then you need to attend an information and organizational meeting of a new group forming in Central Maryland who’s mission is to:

* Provide safe, environmentally responsible, and economically feasible processing services to small and mid-sized poultry producers
* Organize a buying group for chicks, poults, feeds, and poultry supplies to secure quantity discounts.
* Provide training and continuing education about regulations, marketing, and production
* Service volume sales accounts through aggregation of group member birds to provide an additional outlet to group members and sufficient supplies to volume buyers.

There is a tremendous demand in Maryland for poultry produced under sustainable and environmentally appropriate management systems such as free-range and small flock production. In 2010, the Maryland Department of Agriculture and Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene implemented a training course for on-farm processing of poultry. While this process does allow for retail sale of on-farm processed poultry now, it requires (1) every farm to purchase its own set of processing equipment (2) requires each farmer to develop a composting or treatment system for processing wastes, (3) provides for limited traceability of product.

Members in this new poultry processing and marketing group will still be required to complete the Maryland Department of Agriculture’s Poultry Processing License training and receive a license from the State before processing birds with this group.

If these goals match yours, then register and plan to attend an important organizational meeting, Wednesday, April 25, 7:00 PM, at Farmer Tom’s, Tom Reynolds, 427 Cockeys Mill Rd., Reisterstown, MD 21136. Membership information and light refreshments will be provided. Please contact Ginger Myers, University of Maryland Extension, gsmyers@umd.edu, 301-432-2767, ext. 338 to register.

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